



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

tatives. They may be called the Demagogues of Realism. In fact, were they not all representatives of Realism, those who signed in 1886 the famous *Lettre des cinq*, as a protest against the extravagances of *La Terre*? Daudet was much less *brise-vitre*, though belonging to the first generation also, and will remain as a truer representative of the new school.

It was this same desire, or it may be necessity, to emphasize certain features of Naturalism in order to be sure not to be misunderstood, that has induced the leaders of early days to insist so much upon animal life. Once the victory was earned this was no longer urgent, and Zola himself, in his later career—it has not been noticed enough—is not as terrible by far as he used to be in his first naturalistic books.

One more remark in connection with this point: A distinction ought to be made even to-day between writers who claim to be naturalists or realists and those who actually are. The criterion to make the distinction is easy enough to indicate, namely, ART. Rachilde not long ago expressed this very well: “Suis-je pour l’ovariotomie, ou suis-je pour l’avortement . . . voilà ce qu’un critique doit se demander en face d’une œuvre d’art [aujourd’hui] . . . eh bien, je serais pour l’œuvre d’art—s’il y avait lieu.” (*Mercur de France*, Dec. 1904, p. 769.) This is perfectly true; and neither social nor medical theories make a book belong to Naturalism, still less to literature and art.

3.) Realism, having now gained official recognition in France, as had Idealism in the seventeenth century, realistic masterpieces may appear without any “school” standing back of them. It is not necessary, therefore, to infer from the success of *La Maternelle* and from the enthusiasm on the part of the public, a return in France to a narrow literary tendency. The book represents that part of Realism that has come to stay, and will certainly find expression every now and then in such pure form; just as Classicism occasionally manifests itself in masterpieces that remind one of the best products of the classical period. For instance, the tragedies of Hervieu are of a perfectly classical type—except only that the Greek and Roman costumes and names have been dropped and that the idea of the *fatum* comes up in a more

up-to-date form. Think also of a poet like Sully Prudhomme, and why not Leconte de Lisle?

In conclusion, a word about the *Académie Goncourt*. Still assuming that my understanding of French literature is correct, there is something more than a mere fit of bad humor against the conservative spirit of the French Academy, in the creation of the Goncourt Academy. It is an institution that may stand in France for the rights of Realism, as the literary section of the Institute stands for Idealism. Since they do not seem to care to put both tendencies together, for fear of bringing in confusion, every one will be satisfied now. Both extreme conceptions of art will be represented, but kept carefully separated from each other.

The fact that the more recent body is a private foundation, is of no moment. In the seventeenth century the government, being very autocratic, was the natural patron of any kind of association. To-day, individualism is in order. Thus the French Academy was founded—or rather re-founded—by Richelieu, as a representative of the French nation; the Goncourt Academy by free and independent citizens of the Third Republic.

ALBERT SCHINZ.

*Bryn Mawr College.*

---

## DANTE AND LANDOR.

Curiosity to know if it was really an irreconcilable hostility between classicism and romanticism that called forth Landor’s short-sighted criticism of the *Divine Comedy*, led to an examination of the scattered passages in the *Imaginary Conversations* bearing on the subject. The weakness of such testimony as a basis of induction is apparent. Dialogue always gives the fullest chance for inconsistency. Sometimes the conversation may be wholly undramatic, between the author and a man of straw of his own creation. But since it may just as well be wholly dramatic, devoid entirely of the author’s personal opinions, only the best of evidence can warrant a contrary judgment. Forseeing possible misunderstanding from this very source, Landor prefaced his *Imaginary Conversations* with an express disavowal

of responsibility for the statements of his characters. This alone should make one chary of drawing too arbitrarily from his prose the ground of his poetic faith. Furthermore, the fact that Landor *in propria persona* was hardly a consistent and logical thinker should be remembered. Yet even with these provisos granted, some light on Landor's real feelings toward the Florentine may perhaps be gathered from numerous comments in the *Imaginary Conversations*.

Justice, however, exacts the admission that in the *Pentameron*, where the bulk of Landor's Dantean criticism is found, an honest and successful attempt is made to adapt the dialogue to the speakers. Boccaccio, accordingly, is playful, fond of bright sayings even when tainted with irreverence; Petrarch is more serious, as tradition has always represented him. Hence much of Boccaccio's talk on the flames of hell, and his own unwillingness even to assist Minos in the performance of his duties, is presumably for the sake of dramatic truth. Boccaccio, likewise, poses as the scientific critic of the schools, and his rather captious remarks on minor flaws in the poem—its tautologies, inconsistencies and the like—must be accepted as utterances of an adept at literary cavil. Petrarch, on the other hand, is more impressionistic, trusting to poetic insight, one whose judgment would be easily warped by friendship to confess greater liking for the *Decameron* than for the *Comedy*. He was as predisposed to praise his friend's work as Marvel was to exalt above all rivals Milton's epic. Therefore, when Boccaccio light-heartedly disclaims any wish to toss souls into the eternal fire, or when Petrarch proclaims boldly that the *Decameron* has 'more character, more nature, more invention, than either modern or ancient Italy . . . ever claimed or ever knew,' the identity of the speaker must be respected enough, at least, to remove from Landor full responsibility for his words.

Owing rather to his dramatic purpose than to a vacillating tendency of Landor's mind, many inconsistencies exist in these dialogues. Petrarch never expects to see a greater than Dante arise, Metastasio awaits Italy's grandest poetry in her 'Roman afterbirth'; Marvel finds depression in a long poem both unavoidable and desirable, others require an even elevation throughout. But these

very inconsistencies make us more willing to accept as Landor's own those views which are frequently expressed and never contradicted. On such statements our conclusions must rest.

One of the most frequently recurring criticisms, nowhere gainsaid by any character, is clearly stated by Petrarch: 'At least sixteen parts in twenty of the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* are detestable both in poetry and principle.' Now Landor clearly appreciated the excellencies of many scenes in the *Comedy*—especially the punishments of Ugoglio and Francesca; he saw fully the natural simplicity and the irresistible power of Dante's use of that language which he did so much to dignify; and, if Milton be the author's spokesman, Landor realized also the intensity and grasp of the poet's intellect. Nevertheless his final verdict on larger considerations was perverted seemingly by a lack of insight into Dante's character and purpose. If there are some wonderful situations in the poem they are to him like oases; a desert of fifteen cantos in the *Paradise* before the first refreshing shade. If Dante's diction is terse and strong, it is degraded often to base purposes. From this it is hazardous to infer that Landor himself would have defended fully Petrarch's assertion that the *Comedy* is the 'most immoral and impious book' ever written. But owing to his misconception of the purpose of the poem, some such feeling dominated his criticism.

The key to the whole *Inferno* is found in the inscription on Hell's gate (III, 4-6):

'Justice it was that moved my Maker high,  
The Power of God it was that fashioned me,  
Wisdom supreme and primal Charity.'

Though Dante's emotion on meeting Brunetto Latini exhibits in him a nobler motive than ferocious malice, only by comprehension of these lines is the Florentine exile's conception of divine justice and his mission as the involuntary and often reluctant expositor of its inexorable laws, made plain. One who takes the *Hell* as Petrarch does, as a collection of satires with no moral basis, will find in it intolerance, ferocity and vileness. This seems to be Landor's personal feeling. Alfieri, to be sure, once points out a distinction between the indignation actually felt by Dante, and the moroseness falsely laid to his account,

which suggests that Landor has at times inklings of the truth. So often, however, do the characters complain of malignancy in Dante, that it seems to be Landor's own opinion. It would not be strange were it so. From Voltaire to Coleridge the Christian purpose of the *Comedy* was unseen, and quite inevitably the 'wretches' in their misery aroused little interest or sympathy.

All this has nothing to do with the supposed repugnance of the classicist for the Gothic. This also we find to an extent grounding what must be interpreted as Landor's own ideas. An uncouthness in phrase, a disgusting vividness in picture, whether or not essentially Gothic, are subject to his disapproval. But these are mere details. To Landor the *Comedy* in its entirety appeared as a vast, formless structure reared on no sound foundation. To him, as to Petrarch, it is a great cathedral window broken into countless, separate panes. And though one is led to believe from the words of Petrarch and Cleone that Landor regarded amplitude of dimensions as a requisite of the highest poetry; and though he was at times more lenient toward inequality in a long poem, if Marvel represented truly the author's views, nevertheless Marvel clearly found the architectonics of the poem unintelligible. How otherwise could he charge want of continuity and order to a poem whose numerical details even were rigidly ordered according to a preconceived plan? One who missed the motive force of hell's creation must necessarily fail to see the inevitability of the poem's spiritual progress, to comprehend its true unity. Hence we must conclude that even in this seeming antagonism between two schools of art it is really a misconception of the ethics of this one poem that determined Landor's sentiment.

If scant appreciation of Dante was characteristic of Landor's time, later sentiment, perhaps, has gone to the other extreme. Undeniably truth is to be found in certain criticisms of the *Pentameron*. But it is not positive criticism that should persuade one that Landor appreciated little or much the *Comedy*. The strongest indication is that the great scenes of the poem apparently left slight impression upon him. He praises the narratives of Ugoglio and Francesca, but where is the story of Ulysses, where the confessions of the Earthly Paradise, where the Rose of Heaven?

A sympathetic reader might have forgotten, as Carlyle did, the exact canto in which Beatrice appears; but never the incident. Faint recollections of these and other similar scenes may have prompted the statement: 'Alighieri is grand by his lights, not by his shadows; by his human affections, not by his infernal': but the weight of evidence indicates that Landor himself little realized how true were his words; how extremely human was the creator of the cruelest punishments of the *Hell*, how completely the lights dispel the shadows as the days of the wonderful journey from spiritual death to radiant life are unfolded.

ELBERT N. S. THOMPSON.

*Lehigh University.*

---

#### AN IMPRESSION OF THE CONDITION OF SPANISH AMERICAN LIBRARIES.

Whoever is acquainted with the condition or the care of any of the public libraries or the archives of convents in the Spanish Peninsula, has little reason to be hopeful of a less regrettable state of affairs in the republics of Spanish America. Whereas Spain has been troubled by civil wars, invasions and revolutions which have destroyed a large part of her literary works, Spanish America has been subject to a chronic confusion from time immemorial to such an extent, that the majority of landmarks of most forms of Spanish culture have well-nigh disappeared.

A search for libraries in South America is discouraging at the outset for many reasons, among which the chief one is the difficulty in finding out just where they are. The public libraries are, of course, marked on the outside, but private or convent libraries are frequently hidden, or housed in some inaccessible part of the towns. Many people generally know in an indefinite way that so-and-so has a fine library or that such-and-such a convent is noted for its wealth in old books, but when you have been driven from pillar to post in a vain search for several days, you appreciate the genuine disillusionment of "going out for wool and coming back shorn." Though a visit to libraries in the far South would naturally be planned only as a